Depot Town Rag

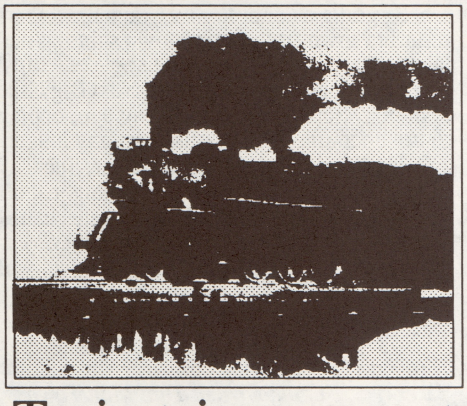
Volume 16, Number 7 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

100% FREE
Rag Content
July 1993

- 1800's scandalous slang
- *Awnings are 'eyebrows'*
- Frog Island supporters
- Trading Post to move
- **Heritage Jazz solicits**

and other strictly local stuff. . . .

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198



Train trips can get you ready for Heritage theme

Yes, you can still cross the country behind a steam locomotive, eat in the dining car and sleep in a Pullman berth. The Bluewater Michigan Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society ran their *Anniversary Steam Special* on June 26 and 27 from Allen Park to Milan and Bellevue, Ohio to a sold-out crowd that enjoyed both coach and 'Silver Class' accommodations.

That elegant mode of travel will be repeated on board the *Northern Arrow* September 10-12 when the diesel/electric locomotives will pull a full consist of passenger rolling stock from Birmingham/Pontiac/Durand/Alma to Petoskey and the Little Traverse Bay region. That weekend excursion will include extra packages for overnights at Holiday Inn, Perry Hotel, or the Bay View Inn. Side trips are being planned to Mackinac Island, Charlevoix, Harbor Springs or a Petoskey-Bay View tour.

A third trip is planned for railfans on the *European Rail Venture* which will tour France, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands from August 19 to September 2. Flights leave Detroit Metro airport.

For ordering information, write:
Bluewater Michigan Chapter, NRHS
P.O. Box Box 296
Royal Oak, MI 48068-0296
or call:
313-399-7963
(Ticket orders or information)
or 800-594-5162 (VISA, MasterCard or Discover ticket orders only.)

A rough draft for a grand operatic presentation to commemorate the recent Ypsilanti flap over recycling

T*R*A*S*H

Synopsis: a tragi-comedy tale of local motion on the recycling front

• The Patronage of St. Peter
(Milgrig the Mordant)

Bleeding former City Managers enter, moaning an overture of dismay and horror. They tell of their experience on the moors of the local landfill, recalling the days of cameraderie - then treachery - at the hands of locally elected politicos. As each ends his tale, he vomits into a recycling box and exits to a waiting ambulance.

St. Peter is seen among the audience, oblivious to the Managers' sad tales, soliciting signatures for petitions and getting names and addresses for his ever-growing mailing list. He says he's not interested in the current agenda.

"I'm Gonna Wash That Town Right Outta My Hair"

"I Have Got A Lovely Bunch of Coconuts"

• Brunhilde and the Big-boned Beauties

Every basso profundo female in this scene wears the same Lane Bryant uniform, covered with handmade elementary school jewelry and save-the-earth-by-recycling slogans. They are engaged in constant contrapuntal banter, prattle, recrimination and shouting - usually in great disagreement - but sometimes accidentally agreeing with each other. They find it even more maddening when this happens.

The fat ladies may sing, but this show ain't over. With each new solo ten more arias are written. Agents begin to solicit contracts with Hollywood producers and Democratic campaign managers rewrite their resumés. Ayn Rand leaves message on answering machine.

"Stand By Your Man"

"Bess, You Is My Woman"

• Handsome Knights in Recycleable Aluminum Armor

A phalanx of tenors constantly rises with each new election, quickly fading into absurdity and oblivion as his or her usefullness to the plot wanes. As recycling evolves through the metamorphosis of The People's Politik, each knight sings fealty in the first verse, wonders of his capabilities by the second. Verse number three explores self doubts and, by the fourth verse, the knight is seeking reelection - alone - as activists begin to groom replacements for the gatherings at the far corner of the Round Table.

"You Made Me Love You; I Didn't Want To Do It"

"Battle Hymn of the Fifth Ward"
-hummed softly by a line of wounded dancers

• A Happy Celebration of the Multi-Culturated Natives

Michigan Week slogans attract tourists from all over and the town's former mayors meet in a bankrupt rented hall beyond the city limits for a group photo. The Visitors and Convention Bureau sells tickets at $575.98 per person and only the wives of the dignitaries attend - hoping for complimentary passes and a free meal. The multitudes don't buy tickets, but mingle in the parking lot outside and cut the tires off the waiting limosines.

"Solidarity Forever"

"The Official Anthem of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce"

• The Obligatory Greek Chorus of Constant Volunteers

Loyal to their beliefs in recycling trash so The Very Rich can keep manufacturing waste at ultra-high profit, these drudges happily sort plastic containers and newspapers in the worst weather seen in a millenium - singing up-beat ditties to keep their spirits high. Even when the political shifting thanklessly deposits them onto the streets, they selflessly scourge the neighborhoods on pick-up days hoping to find among the scraps an invitation to come back to the recycling yard and wallow around in the mud some more.

"The Anvil Chorus"

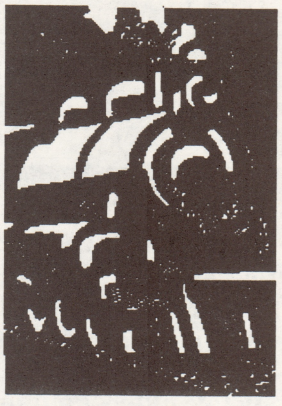
"On the Street Where You Live"

• A Plot to Plot New Plots: It Thickens to a Rich Gumbo

Dreams recalled through hypnosis. Job offers and backroom cronyisms are remembered verbatim. **[Continued on page two]**

Three themes and images suggested for district designs at August Festival

With this year's Ypsilanti Heritage Festival poster design recalling the back page of a fifth grade social studies book, folks all over town are beginning to get creative with ways to relate this year's theme: Trains Planes and Automobiles.



Depot Town, of course, has long played up what had been seen as a bad image in other towns. "Down by the station" and "the other side of the tracks" seemed to lend a certain charm to the district, and the underdog mentality definitely helped these old buildings to become viable in today's economy.

Now, joined by the history of the Willow Run Airport and the rich legacy of automobile production in our town, the Festival Committee asks all who revel in Ypsilanti's role in these three activities to bring their thoughts together to celebrate their viability as a three-pronged approach to positive public promotions.

In addition to the poster, window displays, table toppers, special sales, theatrical costumes, special menu or drink offers, and related advertising themes are encouraged to bring out the relatedness of the three.

No doubt Depot Town will haul out its toy trains, model railroads and train lanterns that we often seen in Christmas windows, but what else can we add to these items to connect with the remaining two portions of the theme?

Already, J&R Trading Post's Gerry Tillman is dusting off her scale model replica of the infamous Tucker automobile which was designed and promoted right around the corner here on the east side.

Car clubs and special interest groups are expected to reach beyond their usual boundaries and include two other images as we travel the surface and air in new combinations next month.

Now Americans can see why we were never able to take a train to the airport.

Rowdy behavior gets quick response through 9-1-1 call

Maybe it was all those school teachers looking foward to starting their summer break, but it looks like nobody's getting away with anything on the streets in Depot Town this summer. When a young man shouted obscene and racial epiphets at passers-by during June's sidewalk DTA meeting, the meeting adjourned just long enough to call the 9-1-1 emergency number.

When a second party threatened violence, five Ypsilanti patrol cars arrived and quickly carried the offensive person away. Their investigation proves it was worth the call.

Millworks sees new paint job

Cream, beige and light blue now accent the long building on River Street which houses the Food Co-op, Sourdough Bakery and an architect's studio. Ritzier neighborhoods might call it Sunlight, Coffee Au Lait, and Williamsburg/Wedgewood Blue, but down here's it's just a nice paint job.

[T*R*A*S*H continued from page one]

Nixon's tapes turn up. Text of law suit leaked to press. Long pants sent out to be pressed. Front row cellos simulate shark sounds.

"Theme from Jeopardy"

• **The Conflagrations: A, B, C, D, E, F, and maybe even G**

The opening shot is one of those '30s black-and-white movie sequences where bundles of newspapers are thrown from trucks onto rainy city streets and the headlines rotate into the camera - but the film is played in reverse.

Elections, annual meetings, angry letters to the editors of the local dailies, newspaper editorials, broadsides, snide brochures and bulletins, hate mail, bar fights, and threats of law suits; all have their place in goading the average citizen to take sides whether they can tell what's going on or not. City Councilmembers return to town from out-of-town shindigs and take up collections to meet expenses. Most agree that they're ready for the Next Big Issue and have stopped recycling long ago, hoping to not encourage this foolishness any longer.

Tying these many battles together, Sue City Sue, a comely lass who's been sitting just off stage for a terribly long time, sings a ballad which paints the whole mess in a most objective manner. At the end of her epic historical narrative rendition she is stoned by an angry crowd and recycled, herself.

"No Good Deed Goes Unpunished"
-an ode to active objectivism
Reprise: *"Gonna Wash That Man/Town Right Outta My Hair"*

• **The Big Viking-type Funeral Finale and Fireworks Display**

. . . in which several politicians who have stayed on beyond their political shelf life sail out of town toward the Mega-Landfill on a flaming garbage barge wearing robes, horned headdresses and smoking Cuban cigars. Fireworks created from molten fast food containers smolder on the horizon. An acrid smoke settles across Ypsilanti as residents call their lawyers to enjoin a civil suit against the city. As the barge sinks into the miasma of a Chemtone-polluted inland lake, the torch-bearing citizenry stands on the shore at the former sewage treatment plant to sing the joyous finale:

"Jubilation T. Cornpone!"

• **Curtain Call:** As the sunset turns fuscia and gold in the contaminated air, thirty water scooters bearing commercial recycling companies' logos swish across the stage raising lime green roostertails in their wake.

Ypsilanti's
Farmers' Market
Market Hours:
Wednesday and Saturday 7am - 3pm
Open year 'round
in the railroad freighthouse
Ample Free Parking
Live music every Saturday am
For information: 483-1480

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- **Reproduction Furniture**
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- **Floral Designs - silks and dried**

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Please come in and sign our guest list for an invitation.

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1/4 mile east of Depot Town Town at Cross and Miles Street
Experience necessary to help you with your spine and nervous system problems relating to Vertebral Subluxation.
• When you're in our hands, you're in good hands •
Call us today - 313-485-2120

The Heritage Jazz Competition

Competition audition tapes now being accepted

WEMU's musicologist, Linda Yohn, is accepting audition tapes for the August 20, 21, 22 Heritage Jazz Competition which takes place under another giant tent in historic Depot Town.

The Heritage Jazz Competition is one of the Heritage Festival's oldest traditions and it's free. Awards and prizes go to the region's top jazz performers and the event has become an excellent showcase for young musical talent.

Along with all the traditional events such as the Heritage Parade, the Historic Home Tour, arts and crafts, antique autos, and ethnic foods, the Jazz Competition has become as indigenous to Depot Town as the Ypsilanti Historic District of Victorian buildings and quaint storefronts.

Lovers of good music find the Competition a highlight of the weekend, and others discover these jams simply because it's an easy place to sit down and listen and enjoy a refreshment.

Radio station WEMU is accepting audition tapes at their studios in EMU's King Hall and more information is available by calling (313) 487-2229.

Jazz program sponsors keep *The Rag* going

Sponsors who placed ads in the Frog Island program book last month helped the Depot Town Association fund which supports the publication of the monthly *Depot Town Rag*. The 32-page magazine also gave space to extoll the virtues of this tiny block and even carried a map highlighting the locations of the local sponsors who advertised in the program.

Monthly sponsors of *The Rag*, whether they had an ad in the program or not, were also featured in a listing in the slicker which gave space to continuous promotion for the district.

Despite the nearly constant rain for the event, jazz lovers sat under the big tent and read about Depot Town, then scurried down the street under their umbrellas to discover the place. According to sales that weekend in June, they were not disappointed.

Dateline: Depot Town:

Trading Post to move

Since the days when Godfroy traded with the Natives Americans in what became Riverside Park, it seems there's always been a 'trading post' near this crossing of the Huron River. The most recent incarnation of that tradition will close after Heritage Festival when Jerry Tillman will move her J&R Trading Post to a location outside of Depot Town.

This month will see the removal of the ice cream, candy and table service in the western-most portion of her commercial space which has been pressed into continuous service for the commercial enterprises of the area. The site of the first 'safe bank' in the Michigan Territory, the western bay of the historic Follett House was the birthplace of Benjamin Follett's bank which eventually became the National Bank of Ypsilanti, then metamorphosed into Bank One.

Tillman's many-vendored antique and treasure displays at 19 East Cross Street will remain in the large shop's other spaces through August and the annual Heritage Festival.

Scott Claassen, owner of the Follett House, can be reached through the Daily Grind Coffee Shop for information on the soon-to-be vancant property at this prime location.

Jerry Tillman says she hopes to remain in Ypsilanti and her many friends and customers wish her continued good luck in her venture.

Planting shows results of good planning

Everyone on the block sends their thanks to the many volunteers who turned out last month to place the flowers in tubs and beds up and down the block and around the signal tower at the corner. For the first time, DDA funds paid for the flowers. Now it's up to the rest of us to keep them watered throughout the summer.

DDA news:

Progress at the depot?

A scout group has briefed City officials regarding their proposal to restore the MCRR depot. No response has yet been reported to their unique plan for that work.

Meanwhile, the City has reported vandalism of the structure to its current owners. Repairs are expected - by City statute and ordinance.

Depot Doo redone

An all black-and-white theme is the new decor for Linda Lister's Depot Doo hair salon at 24 East Cross with the installation of new operators' chairs, sinks, work stations and charcoal carpeting from front to back. The tanning bed has been moved to the rear of the shop to make even more work space for her ever-growing clientele up front.

A highlight of the new interior is Linda's extensive collection of Marilyn Monroe art.

Awnings give the block its missing 'eyebrows'

New awnings have been appearing up and down the streets of Depot Town all summer as if to make up for the flatness felt in our ancient buildings since the top floor cornices were removed.

When a stone cornice collapsed in Detroit in the 1960s, municipalities all over Michigan passed ordinances for their removal, since the masonry had loosened over the years from the freezing and thawing in their mortar. As a result, even wood and tin cornices were removed -- and the facades of Michigan's famed Italianate commercial buildings have seemed pretty blank since that time.

Depot Town's new awnings alleviate that problem, casting shade and softening fronts from the railroad tracks to the river.

A variety of shapes have been added to the traditional shed style awning; barrels, canopies, and truncated pyramids easily add to the color and form of the neighborhood.

And what colors! These lovely hues are one more opportunity for the district to show off its continuous creative spirit.

Depot Town ClearingHouse

Commercial & Residential Properties available

in Ypsilanti's historic railroad district

Call: 482-6371 or 485-8228

for the current listing

Don't get your hair done just anywhere . . .
. . . get it done at

Richard Reid's Hair Station

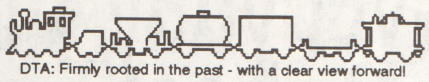
50 E. Cross Street • 485-8228

in historic Depot Town

This is a non-smoking environment

Angela, Mary, Crystal, Joyce, Richard, Lynn

Depot Town Association, Inc., 17 June 1993


DTA: Firmly rooted in the past - with a clear view forward!

Vice President Judi Monaghan chaired the meeting in the absence of the president. The editor took minutes in the absence of the secretary. Due to the perfect weather, the meeting was held at the tables in front of the Daily Grind. (See more interesting items on page three.)

The treasury holds more than $8000 in the general fund.

- Thanks to Jack Smith Distributors for splitting the cost with DTA of $450 for live music at the showing of the Budweiser Clydesdales in on June 15.

- Another recent public relations expense was $220 for port-a-johns at the Ypsi Street Rods kick-off held here.

Depot Town Downtown Development Authority (DDA):

- Paul Fetters reported that there has been vandalism to the depot and that the City has notified the owners.

- Repair work is progressing on the Caboose with much activity in the past week.

- Scouts have briefed City officials on their proposal to rehab the MCRR depot as they have done successfully with a lighthouse recently.

- South side parking improvement meetings continue between the owners of those properties.

Frog Island and The Ark:

- The Ark has made its final payment to DTA for the concept and full ownership of the Frog Island Festival and DTA will sign off on the ownership of the name with the State of Michigan.

- Frog Island Festival '93 is being set up as we meet and the program book is ready for distribution at Friday's opening.

- Stage manager received permission to use DTA/WEMU's stage sections for the event.

- The program book should net DTA $1185.00, thanks to our loyal sponsors. Several business owners expressed disappointment at not being asked to participate.

Heritage Jazz T-shirts:

Pam Hamblin has proposed a new T-shirt design for this August's Heritage Jazz Competition. The shirts will be sold before and during the performances at Heritage Festival inside the Jazz tent, only. DTA will provide $1000 for start-up and will expect a progress report at the July meeting.

Heritage Festival:

In the absence of an official report from an official representative, members would like to see such an item on the July agenda.

- The sculpture competition has been canceled for lack of response by the artists.

- A classic motorcycle exposition has been proposed as an event in the middle of the street this year. Any takers?

- The Freighthouse will host a train show and Market vendors are planning for an alternative location on that Saturday.

- The Antique Engine Club may show their machines on Frog Island this year.

. . . but nobody knows for sure. Maybe at the July meeting?

Strictly local stuff:

July 1993

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Depot Town Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 15th
J&R Trading Post

Depot Town
Antique Engine Club
7:30 pm Thursday, 22nd
at the Freighthouse

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
David Blackmer, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Guarantee

Your support makes a difference!

Please include me among the members of
The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Name _____
Street _____
City_____State_____ZIP _____

I'm available to help with Association projects. Call me at _____

Annual dues:

- ❑ $25 Regular Member (Property or business owner)
- ❑ $10 Associate Member (Interested in and supportive)
- ❑ $100 Life Member (A great deal if you had joined in 1976!)
- ❑ Please place my name on the monthly mailing list of *The Depot Town Rag*
- ❑ Don't mail *The Rag*. I'll pick it up in the neighborhood.

✂ Clip and send check to "Depot Town Association"
c/o The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Hansen's
Standard Printing

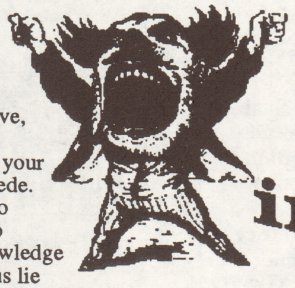
Having A Summer Sale? Advertise With A Customized Flyer!

35 E. Cross Street • Depot Town
Ypsilanti, Michigan
(313) 483-0339

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival
Trains, Planes & Automobiles
August 20, 21, 22, 1993

DEPOT TOWN
UP YOUR YPSI

Stick it in *The Rag*
for only $10 month.
You can't get any more local than this!
Send your copy to The Old Caboose by the 3rd Thursday and you'll see your ad here the following month.
Many payment plans. Trust us.
The Depot Town Rag:
All the news in one block in one month



Everyday Life in Depot Town in the nineteenth century

A Glossary for the 1800's

Absquatulate: To take leave, to disappear.
Accelerator: Not a part of your car, but a velocipede.
Acknowledge the corn: To admit the truth; to confess; to acknowledge one's own obvious lie or shortcoming.
Across lots: To push on straight through despite obstacles.
All on one stick: A conglomeration or combination.
All-overish: Uncomfortable.
Allow: To admit; to be of the opinion.
Almighty: Huge.
Amalgamation: The mixing of blacks and whites.
Anti-fogmatic: Raw rum or whiskey.
Backing and filling: Literally, the alternative movements of a steamboat. Metaphorically, changing one's mind.
Balderdash: Nonsense; foolishness; empty babble.
Bee: Gathering of friends, family and neighbors to carry out a specific, time-consuming job, e.g., corn-husking or quilting bee.
B'hoy: A rowdy yong man; reveler; reffian.
Biddy: A hen.
Big bugs: Bigwigs; important people.
Bodaciously: An exaggeration of "bodily."
Body: A person.
Boodle: A crowd of people.
Bub and sis: Brother and sister, especially applied to children.
Bummer: The original word for bum. A lazy hobo or drunk.
Candle-lighting: Dusk.
Catawamptiously chawed up: Utterly defeated, badly beaten.
To catch a weasel asleep: Referring to something impossible or unlikely, in regard to someone who is always alert and is seldom or never caught off guard. e.g., You can't trick old Joe any sooner than you can catch a weasel asleep.
A caution: A warning. Also a ludicrous example, or somethng striking.
Chance: A quantity.
Chirk: Cheerful. Synonyms: chirp, chirpy.
Cocked hat: To knock someone sensless or to shock him completey. To knock into a cocked hat.
Codfish aristrocracy: A contemptuous term for people who have made money in business.
Cold as a wagon tire: Dead.
Continental: The money issued by Congress during the Revolutionary War. It eventually became synonymous with anything worthless.
Cotton to: To take a liking to.
Death on: Very fond of or very talented at.
Deef: Deaf.
Didoes: To cut up didoes was to get into mischief.
Doggery: A cheap drinking estalishment; in modern lingo, a dive.
Dude: A dandy.
To see the elephant: To see it all, to experience it all. Sometimes pertaining to war, to see battle.
Exfluncticate: To utterly destroy.
Express: The mails; a mail stage.
F.F.V.: First Families of Virginia, of which many claimed to be members to gain special treatment, but eventually used in jest.

Slang lingo rocked the block a century ago

Quaint customs of such neighborhoods as Depot Town have certain ways of speaking, unusual mannerisms and crotchety ways of interacting with people. Always did, always will. In his book for writers of histoircal fiction, Marc McCutcheon notes: "Humbug? Sheconnery? Useless truck or gum? Hornswoggling? Honey-fuggling? Not in this book dear sir! The Americanisms in this book are the genuine article, I swan to mercy, a huckleberry above anyone's persimmon. Some pumpkins, a caution, 100 percent certified by a Philadelfy lawyer. If not, dad-blame it, I'll hang up my fiddle, and you can sass me, knock me into a cocked hat, give me jesse, fix my flint, settle my hash, ride me out on a rail, and have a conniption fit, you cussed scalawag. Now ain't that the beatingest language you ever did hear? Sure beats the Dutch! Pshaw! Do tell!"

Most Depot Towners still have enough of the old custom in them to recognize at least a few of McCutcheon's examples but, if you really want to sound like the vintage personage in your antique duds at August's Heritage Festival, you'd better study the following 19th Century vocabulary list. Either that or spend more time with Peter Fletcher, Ypsilanti's contemporary expert of antique linguistic styles.

Fice, fiste, fyst: A worthless dog" a mongrel.
Make a fist: To succeed at something
Fit: Popular slang for fought.
Gallnipper: A large mosquito.
Gotham: New York City.
Grum: Surly; gloomy; glum.
Gum: Lies; exaggerations. As a verb, to dupe someone.
Guttersnipe: A homeless child who roamed and slept in the streets. Hundreds roamed the larger cities throughout much of the century.
Hooter: An atom; a tiny amount. (Not at all like the theme of the popular restaurant chain!)
Huckleberry above a persimmon: A cut above. The phrase had many variations and shades of meaning.
Humbug: A deception; a hoax; an imposter; the equivalent of the modern B.S.
Johhny, John: A Chinaman.
Jonathan: The American people. Also known as Brother Jonathan or Uncle Sam.
Lay: Price; terms; salary.
Limb: The socially acceptable or polite word for leg.
Log-rolling: A community effort to roll logs and clear land for a cabin's construction.
To get or give the mitten: A lady, in turning down a proposal, is said to give the gentleman the mitten.
Mudsill: The uneducated, working class.
Notions: A wide range of miscellaneous articles for sale.
Off the reel: Immediately.
Opine: To be of the opinion.
Peaked: Thin or sickly in appearance.
Peart: Fresh and happy; sprightly.
Plunder: Personal belongings; baggage.
Post the pony: Pay up.
Puke: A Missourian.
Pull foot: To leave in a hurry.
Rambunctious: Rowdy, disorderly or boisterous.
Reckon: To think or guess.
Retiracy: Retirement.
Ride out on a rail: To be forced to leave town.
Sabbaday, Sabberday: The Sabbath day.
Salt River: To row someone up Salt River is to beat him up or to give him hell.
Sam Hill: Euphemism for the devil.
Set by, set much by: To regard; to esteem.
Seven by nine: Someting or someone of inferior or common quality, originating from common window panes of that size.
Shecoonery: A corruption of chicanery.
To cut shines: To pull practical jokes or tricks; to make funny business.
Shucks: Worthless people or things (from corn or pea shucks).
Shut pan: Shut up; shut your mouth.
Sin to Moses, sin to Crockett: Something that would shame either Moses or Davy Crockett.
Skedaddle: To flee.
Slantidicular: Slanting.
Slick: To fix or dress up.
Soaplock: A rowdy. Named after a hairstyle (cut short behind and long in front and parted to fall below the ears on the sides, sometimes as far as the collar) worn by such a rowdy.
Sockdolger: A powerful punch or blow.
The States: Used in the western territories (and until 1837 in Depot Town) to denote the organized states back east.
Steady habits: The land of steady habits was New England.
Store: The word shop was used most popularly throughout the 1700s but gradually gave way to store in the early 1800s. Even in the 1980s, Depot Towners called the business group "The Merchants' Committee.
Tote: To carry.
Trace: A trail or path.
Truck, spun truck: Garden produce intended for market. Later it came to mean any quantity of "stuff."
Vamose: To leave quickly.
Wake snakes: To raise a ruckus.

Sometime between now and Heritage Festival see how many of these you can work into a casual conversation out on the sidewalks of Cross and River Streets in Ypsilanti just to ad to the authenticity of the occasion. They may wonder what the Sam Hill you're spinning — out there where the tracks go slantidicular to the street - and reckon it's time for you to seek your retiracy. Best you post the pony and pull foot off the reel. Simply absquatulate!

Next month: Railroad terms of the 1800s.

Baked On Automotive Finishes • Complete Collision Repair
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Scott Sobbry Bruce Sobbry

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We extend special thanks to both our new and continuing sponsors. Let them know they're appreciated! -ed.

A Depot Town SAMPLER

Getting ready for company

This is the month to prepare ourselves for lots of people coming into the block to look us over. Some of them are regulars; some come for the first time. Others seem to be making their annual pilgrimage to Ypsi's version of Mecca. And we always wonder if we're receiving them correctly.

Decisions about how to welcome so many guests can cause greater agony than what kind of flowers to plant in the street-side beds. Deliberating on where to park the Cydesdale's wagons last month gave us something to warm up on. Frog Island's festival crowds gave us another test case. It's always good to test a plan in a small venue, then go full-force with The Big Plan at the end of August.

Heritage Festival's theme for 1993 certainly is inclusive of Depot Town's glorious past and we'll no doubt see plenty of railroad memorabilia in shop windows and hear counteless tales of how everybody's grand daddy worked for the railroad. The old signal tower must have been much larger than the recent replica, if we can believe all those stories about whose ancestors used to staff it. It seems like we've heard 428 stories of who lowered the gates at our crossing in 1893.

Those who come to the district to find the Heritage Jazz Competition will use their own talents to find this game which has floated from Rice Street to the lot behind Aubree's - to Riverside Park - to no place at all - and to the plaza between the Freighthouse and Caboose. They're a resourceful lot, but the Freighthouse location looks like this year's best bet to avoid the sound-spill from the newer stage near the tracks.

Many events have been constant in the decade of Heritage Fests, others shift and change. A few years ago even a telephone company's long distance lines were featured as part of Ypsilanti's 'heritage.' A California sun glasses vendor complemented the image.

Again, most revelers in authenticity will find their roots in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town -- if we can just agree on what we're doing -- and where -- and when.

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